YALSA's
Teens' Top Ten Toolkit

Where teens choose the winners!

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Overview of YALSA's Teens' Top Ten

Background:
The Teens' Top Ten (TTT) is a "teen choice" list of recommended reading, where teens nominate and choose their favorite books of the previous year. Nominators are members of teen book groups (YAGalley Groups) in fifteen school and public libraries around the country. Nominations are posted in April on Support Teen Lit Day, which is the Thursday of National Library Week. Teens across the country are encouraged to read as many nominees as they can during the summer. All interested readers aged twelve to eighteen can vote for their favorites online, anytime from mid August until mid September. The winners are announced via a webcast with special guests during Teen Read Week™ the third week of October.

Ever since Teen Read Week (TRW) was inaugurated in 1998, many librarians have wanted to celebrate and encourage teen reading for more than just one week a year. In 2003, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) offered a chance for librarians to encourage teens to read, nominate, and vote for their ten favorite books of the year. Over 1,700 ballots were cast the first year, and that number has kept growing each year. More than 10,000 teens voted in 2009 for their favorite books!

Goal:
To get teens across the country to read all summer long, and then vote online for their favorites in August and September in preparation of the announcement of the winning titles during TRW in October. TTT also provides librarians with a resource to compliment their summer reading programming and services.

Program Overview
- Every two years, 15 libraries are selected to serve as a TTT nominating group. Applications for the 2010-2012 groups were selected by YALSA's YAGalley Committee in the fall of 2010. The 2013-2014 groups will begin their term in January of 2013. The next time YALSA will accept applications will be in 2014.
- TTT books have wide appeal to teens between the ages of 12 and 18.
- Nominations are posted in April on Support Teen Lit Day, which is the Thursday of National Library Week.
- There are several ways that teens and librarians can participate:

- o Make sure that teens know where to find the nominations list and/or provide bookmarks/flyers with the list or a link to the list from your library's web site.
- o Add the titles to your collection and encourage other area libraries to add them to their collections.
- o Encourage teens/tweens to read the nominated books during the summer so that they can vote in August and September.
- o Promote the list to area public and school librarians by meeting with them or sending [letters](#) and [postcards](#).
- Get your teens or Teen Advisory Groups to spread the word and vote!
- This event is sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

Timeline

- April:
  - Nominations are announced and posted on YALSA's web site during National Library Week
  - Download the reading lists and bookmarks to display in the library
- April-August
  - Incorporate nominations into summer reading booktalks, programs and displays
- August-September:
  - Encourage teens to vote for their favorite titles at www.ala.org/teenstopten
- Third week of October:
  - Celebrate Teen Read Week™
  - Host an awards announcement party
- Ongoing:
  - Use TTT lists for collection development and readers' advisory

Launch Ideas

Summer Reading Programs:

Most public libraries implement summer reading clubs or programs for children and teens. The Teens' Top Ten nomination list provides a great resource for readers' advisory and encouraging your teens to read throughout the summer months.

Campaigns:

Public and school librarians can form partnerships to help promote teen reading throughout the summer. Work with your Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to brainstorm, plan and implement a special launch of your summer reading program. Some ideas to consider:

- Mail or email postcards and letters to help spread the word to librarians, teachers, school librarians, and area residents. Go to Get Publicity for ideas and sample letters. You can personalize them and place them on your library's letterhead!
- Conduct booktalks to English classes using the books on the nomination list, or have your teens create book trailers.
- Set up a table displaying the nominees in the cafeteria of local middle and high schools during their lunch periods. Hand out bookmarks with the reading list and flyers to promote your summer reading program. Provide small giveaways and hand out reading logs.
- Use your library's Web site, blog, social networking page, newsletter, etc. to promote the list and your summer programs. Include a link to the YALSA blog so teens can learn more about the nominated titles.
- Wear a button at work with the TTT logo that says "ask me who this year's nominees are!"

Get Publicity

- Use communication tools at your disposal to launch the Teens' Top Ten nomination list and to promote specific events.
- Place information on the library's web site, blog and/or Facebook page.
- Put flyers up in the library and throughout the local middle and high schools. Include information in the library's newsletter.
- Tailor the sample press release below and send it to your local newspaper.
- Spread the word to school teachers and area librarians with our sample letter. You can copy and paste the sample letter into your library's letterhead.
- For more tips and information on how to get publicity and connect with the media, go to: http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/pio/mediarelationsa/mediarelations/mediarelations.cfm

Sample Letters:
The following letters are examples to send to your local media and area librarians. Edit the letters with your library's information or tailor them to your needs. The sample press release can be sent to your public relations person/department to be distributed, or you can send it yourself to your local newspapers, publications, and television stations. The sample letter to teachers, school librarians, and area public librarians helps spread the word to local librarians that may not know about the Teens' Top Ten or that your library is promoting related events.

Sample Press Release:

For Immediate Release

[insert date]

For more information contact:

[insert complete contact info, including phone # and email for the appropriate library personnel]

[insert headline in 18 pt. font]

Area teens are extending their reading beyond school this summer by taking part in their local teen summer reading program [insert name of program]. Every year in April since 2003, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) releases the list of nominees for the Teens' Top Ten List. Teens are encouraged to read the list of over 25 books to take part in voting for their ten favorite books of the year in August and September. The winning titles will be announced via a webcast during Teen Read Week in October.

Jack Martin, YALSA's president, feels that "today's teens seem to have less and less free time, and there are increasingly more activities to for them to take part in during what little leisure time they have. That is why it's important to encourage teens to set aside some time to read." Literacy is a topic of both local and national concern, and falling test scores and lower graduation rates among teens today are a serious issue. Here in [insert name of hometown or state] standardized reading test scores for teens are [insert latest scores—check your state department of education's web site].

Studies show a regular reading habit makes teens better readers, and area librarian [insert full name of local librarian #1] agrees. [insert full name of local librarian #2] hopes to increase teen literacy locally by offering a series of programs for teens throughout [insert name of summer reading program]. Teens will be encouraged to read books that appeal to them from the Teens' Top Ten list. [describe the programs and provide contact information for readers who want to learn more]

Parents and caregivers of teens are encouraged to make time for their teens to read at home. [insert name of local librarian #2] offers these ideas:

- Visit the local public or school library with your teen to attend a program or to check out books or other reading materials.
- Set aside time each night for the family to read.
- Give books, audiobooks or magazine subscriptions to your teen as a gift or reward.
- Share your favorite book with your teen.
- Visit the Teens' Top Ten site at www.ala.org/teenstopten.
- Join or start a book discussion group at school or at the public library.

Teen Read Week™ is held annually during the third week of October. To find out more about the Teens' Top Ten and Teen Read Week contact your local library at [insert local library contact info here].

Sample Letter to Teachers & School Librarians:

Dear Teachers and School Librarians,

I am writing to ensure that you know about an exciting program for teens called the Teens' Top Ten (TTT), a "teens' choice" list where teens nominate and choose their favorite books of the previous year. Nominees are chosen by members of teen book groups from 15 school and public libraries around the country and are posted in April during National Library Week. Then, teens can vote for their favorite titles during August and September. The winning titles will be announced via webcast during Teen Read Week in October.

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) began the TTT program in 2003. Over 1,700 ballots were cast the first year, and in 2009 that number topped 11,000. The goal of TTT is to encourage teens across the country to read all summer long and then vote online for their favorites in October. **To reach that goal, we need your help**. Please help us with the following:

- Make sure that teens know where to find the nominations list (www.ala.org/teenstopten/) by providing bookmarks/flyers with the list or linking to the list from your web site.
- Add the titles to your collection or encourage students to visit the public library to get copies of the books.
- Encourage teens to read the nominated books during the summer so that they can vote during Teen Read Week.
- Remind your teens to vote at www.ala.org/teenstopten during the end of August and beginning of September.

For more information about the Teens' Top Ten program, please visit the website at www.ala.org/teenstopten/. If you'd like to know more about how we're celebrating at [insert name of your library here], or if you'd like to talk about ways we might partner to promote the TTT, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. Thanks for all that you do to get more teens reading!

Sincerely,

[*Enter your name & contact information here*.]

Programming Ideas
Work with your Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to brainstorm, plan and implement activities to promote your summer reading program and to draw readers into the library by planning regular events during their summer vacation. If you don't already have a TAG or are unsure of how to start one, visit the YALSA Wiki for more information
http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Advisory_Groups .
Your library's summer reading programs are an ideal time to introduce the nominated Teens' Top Ten titles. The books that have been nominated by teens across the country should appeal to the young adult audience that the library is already targeting, making reading during the summer more enticing.

Consider collaborating with local organizations and businesses to hold some of the events outside the library at schools, community centers, shopping malls, coffee shops and other places teens in your community hang out. Branching out into the community will help you reach more teens than those who already frequent the library. It could be as simple as a small display advertising the program and events, or as elaborate as regular parties held just for teens.

For more programming ideas or to add your own ideas, visit the YALSA wiki at:
http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Ideas_for_Using_the_Teens%27_Top_Ten.

BOOK CAMPAIGN CONTEST
What you'll need:
- Teens will need access to art supplies

Cost: $0.50 - $1 per poster board (if you choose to provide poster board)

Have teens create campaign posters of their favorite TTT books. Teens should include reasons why other teens should vote for the titles on the posters. The posters can be displayed in your teen area during the week teens vote for their favorite books to generate interest in the actual voting.

BOOK COVER CONTEST
What you'll need:
- Teens will need access to a camera or art supplies

Cost: Free

Hold an art/photography contest for teens to design a new cover for their favorite nominated title. Participants could send the photo electronically or create their art and submit it at the library. Display covers in your teen area to generate further interest in TTT. Judging could be done by staff, a local "celebrity" panel, or the general public. Personalize our sample entry form.

If you choose, the art could be auctioned off to raise funds to support additional teen programming at the library.

Another similar option is to have teens create campaign posters of their favorite TTT books. Teens should include reasons why other teens should vote for the titles on the posters. The posters can be displayed in your teen area during the week teens vote for their favorite books to generate interest in the actual voting.

BOOK TALKS/BOOK REVIEWS
What you'll need: (If you choose to record the book talks as podcasts, participants will need to have the following available to them.)
- Computer with an Internet connection
- Microphone
- An audio editing program (GarageBand from Apple or Adobe's Audition or Audacity) to record the podcast.
- A VoIP program, such as Skype.

Cost: Free

Encourage teens to write book talks or book reviews for the books on the nominated list. These can then be recorded as a podcast, written on cards to display on the shelves next to the books, or posted on your library website. For book reviews, create your own review form or reproduce the reading log from this toolkit.

One way to help encourage teens is to have some type of raffle prize where teens must write a book talk or book review to get entered in the raffle. Prizes could be donated from local businesses. The library can also make certificates good for $1.00 off late fees, or a discount on books in a used book sale.

BOOK TRAILERS
What you'll need:
- Teens will need access to any of the resources listed below to create their book trailer.

Cost: Free
Encourage teens to create book trailers for the books on the nominated list. This could be done as a contest or just for fun. Include links to the book trailers on your library website.

Possible resources teens can use to create book trailers (please research the terms of use for each resource before recommending them to teens):

Windows Movie Maker (usually standard Windows software):
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/default.mspx

iMovie (usually standard Apple software):
http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/

Sprout Builder:
http://sproutbuilder.com/

Slideshow:
http://www.slide.com/arrange

One True Media:
http://www.onetruemedia.com/

Photobucket:
http://photobucket.com/

Make sure you stress to your teens that they need to use music and images in the public domain!

DOUBLE SCORE SUMMER READING
What you'll need:
- Use the same method to track reading that you otherwise use

Cost: Free

An easy way to incorporate the Teens' Top Ten into your existing summer reading program is to encourage teens to read the nominated titles by letting them count those books as double. You could also offer special prizes for those who choose to read the nominated books, or drawings from among the teens who've read them.

LITERARY JEOPARDY
What you'll need:
- Slide show software
- Projector and a screen (or a blank wall)

Cost: Free

This quiz game could focus on the nominated titles specifically, or on literature in general. It could be done as a single event, perhaps part of the lock-in (see below), or as a series of contests to choose a final winner. Teens could sign up for the event individually or in teams.

To make the jeopardy game, write 5 or 6 questions and answers to each of the nominated titles. Then separate the titles to create 5 different games. Each book will be in its own category, with 5 or 6 categories per game. Put the questions for each category in order from easiest to most difficult and assign points accordingly, with 100 points for the easiest and 500 for the most difficult. Create the board with a slide show program and use a projector to display the board while you play. You can also try using www.jeopardylabs.com rather than slideshow software. There is nothing to download or register for. The site even helps you keep score and it's free! You could also go lo-tech, and make the board on a blank wall or bulletin board using cardstock and tape.

LOOKALIKE CONTEST
What you'll need:
- Digital camera

- Printer
- Bulletin board or poster board to display pictures

Cost: Free

Have teens dress up as the part of a character in one of the nominated titles. Use a digital camera to take a picture of each contestant, then print and post in the library. Teens can vote on who is the best lookalike. Alternatively, you could post the photos online and allow teens to vote electronically. Make sure you have a waiver for each participant before you post their pictures online.

NOVEL SOUNDTRACK
What you'll need:
- A computer with Internet connection
- A location to share the playlist

Cost: Free

Teens create a soundtrack to follow a novel on the nominated list. Teens can create a free playlist at www.playlist.com. If teens need some inspiration for their playlist, you can send them to http://stepheniemeyer.com/index.html. Stephenie Meyer has created playlists for each of her novels. Once the playlist is complete, participants can post their playlist on Facebook, MySpace, even to the library's blog. They can then listen to, and comment on each other's playlists. Check out YALSA's wiki for examples of books and authors with playlists/soundtracks.

An alternative to sharing the actual songs online would be to have the teens create their ideal playlist on paper and have that list on display with the nominated books. You could create bookmarks listing the songs or artists submitted by teens.

OPEN MIC SOIRÉE
What you'll need:
- Microphone
- Stage and seating areas
- Refreshments

Cost: $.50-$2 per person (for refreshments)

This is another event for teens to talk about their favorite books, including the nominated titles, to their peers. Simple to organize, all that's required is a microphone and a relaxed atmosphere. Teens could read a passage from their favorite book, or recite an original poem or song based on their favorite book.

Often teens are reluctant to perform in front of their peers, so you may consider recruiting a few excited volunteers to get things started.

SPEED BOOK SHARING PROGRAM
What you'll need:

- A bell or whistle to signal a partner change.
- Optional: Pencils and notepads could be provided by the library, and could be used as a marketing tool.

Cost: Free

This program is similar to speed dating, but instead of talking to each other about themselves, teens talk about their favorite books. Have the teens each find a partner to spend the first minute with. Each partner gets to talk about their favorite book for 30 seconds. Ring a bell or clap your hands when it's time to switch which partner is talking. After the first minute, teens find a new partner, and repeat until all of the teens have been partners once. Each of the participants will leave this activity with a list of titles recommended by their peers. The more teens participate, the more books they will learn about that they might be excited to read.

YOU'RE SUCH A TEASE
What you'll need:
- Current Teens' Top Ten Nominated Books

Cost: Price of books, depending how many you order

Begin any teen program with a book teaser! Either booktalk one of the nominees or simply read the first chapter aloud to your group of teens. Read the first chapter or an excerpt from each nominee to pique teens' interest. Do this for 25 weeks or for each book that your library owns. Be sure to hand out flyers with the other nominees and voting information.

ANNOUNCEMENT PARTY (DURING TEEN READ WEEK)
What you'll need:
- Computer
- Projector and screen
- Sound system

Cost: Free

Have a mystery game, scavenger hunt, and other activities for teens held during Teen Read Week. Watch YALSA's webcast as the winner of the Teens' Top Ten is announced. Clues for the mystery game and scavenger hunt might come from the nominated titles.

Libraries could also hold many of the activities recommended in this toolkit during the announcement party, as a precursor to the declaration of the winner.

Book Cover Contest!

Reproducible Promotional Items

The following reproducible items can be edited and used to help promote the Teens' Top Ten nominations during your summer reading program. Change the content to fit your needs and include your library's information.

The nominations for the Teens' Top Ten list have been announced! Read as many books on the list as you can to vote for your faves during Teen Read Week in August. Draw or take a picture to create a new cover. Winners will be notified by _____. Take your completed entry form to your library. **THE DEADLINE TO ENTER IS _____.**

Book Cover Contest Guidelines

1. Design cover art for a book that you've read from the nomination list. Attach the design to this entry form.

2. Your cover art must illustrate a book from the current year's list. Lists are available at www.ala.org/teenstopten or @ your library.

3. Use only your own artwork or photography. Tracings, clip art, logos and/or copyrighted material are not acceptable.

4. Any wording on the book cover may be in English or Spanish.

5. Please PRINT the information below. We need ALL this information in order for your book cover to be eligible to win.

Entries will be judged on creativity, originality, impact of the design and overall visual appeal. Winning entries will be printed and displayed at schools and libraries.

NAME
_____
_____

ADDRESS
_____
_____

_____
_____

CITY_____

_____ STATE _____

ZIP _____

EMAIL
_____

PHONE_____

AGE _____

Signature of parent/guardian:
_____

Print name of parent/guardian:
_____

Name of Library:
_____
_____

Visit www.ala.org/teenstopten for a list of this year's nominations

Teens' Top Ten Nominations Reading Log

As you read books that have been nominated for Teens' Top Ten, record the titles and your reaction to the titles. That way when it is time to vote in August you will be able to remember which books you liked best!

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

SUMMARY:

PERSONAL REACTION TO THE BOOK:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

SUMMARY:

PERSONAL REACTION TO THE BOOK:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

SUMMARY:

PERSONAL REACTION TO THE BOOK:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

SUMMARY:

PERSONAL REACTION TO THE BOOK:

Teens: Don't forget!

Vote for your favorite nominees to become the next Teens'
Top Ten!
[beginning & end date]

Vote online @ www.ala.org/teenstopten
For more info, contact your local library.
[contact info]

Teens: Don't forget!

Vote for your favorite nominees to become the next Teens'
Top Ten!
[beginning & end date]

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[contact info]

[Library name]
[Address]

[Library name]
[Address]

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[Address]

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Nominee
www.ala.org/teenstopten

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